

The Comstock Communicator

COMSTOCK HIGH SCHOOL | COMPASS HIGH SCHOOL & ADULT EDUCATION | COMSTOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL
COMSTOCK ELEMENTARY | STEM ACADEMY | CELA | COMSTOCK K-12 VIRTUAL ACADEMY



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MORE NEWS

Turn over to read
Center Point

A newsletter about
the Comstock
Community Center



From the Superintendent

Dear Comstock Community,

We've begun our second semester of the 2021-22 school year with a renewed sense of energy and intentionality. As the Board and Superintendent Team move forward, we will continue to focus on efforts to increase student achievement and learning, protect the safety and good health of students and staff, and improve our facilities and infrastructure.

What makes achieving these goals possible and binds us together is our strong sense of community. While our students and community members represent diverse populations, we all remain committed to having our students attain success—as young scholars who are mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically capable to contribute positively to our society.

Our District continues to seek relationships with our community and local organizations. Our goal is to build upon what is already working. We are fortunate that our community is full of strengths and resources that can lead to greater engagement with the District. We believe that relationships matter.

The bond with our larger community takes many forms and is reciprocal. We have strong parental support for our school projects and events as evidenced by our ever-popular Trunk or Treat and Breakfast with Santa events, various National Honor Society blood drives, Warm Up the Winter clothing drive, Loaves and Fishes food drive,

guest readers in the classroom, Samsung Solve for Tomorrow program, Parent Lighthouse Teams, Band Boosters, support from the Comstock Township Library, and more.

As the Superintendent, I intend to see that we continue to strive for excellence in all that we do and I know that our entire staff joins me in this effort. We know we can't do it alone. Time and time again, our community has responded to our needs and chosen to get involved. For that, I'm thankful to be part of the larger Comstock community.

Through community engagement, you can help us achieve our objectives. Everyone wins! If you wish to find a way to get involved, contact your child's principal and volunteer. Many hands make light work!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me either via email, phone call, or personal visit. I can be reached at jeff.thoenes@comstockps.org or 269-250-8906. If you happen to see me at a future school event or in the community, please take the time to say "hi" and allow me to introduce myself. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

"It's a great day to be a Colt!"



COMSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A SCHOOL DISTRICT DEDICATED TO KIDS
www.comstockps.org

Dr. Jeff Thoenes
Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Comstock Public Schools is to serve our community by empowering, inspiring, and challenging every person within the school district to reach their full potential, and to ensure all students learn and thrive in a safe and healthy environment.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Comstock Public Schools is to be an inclusive, high performing learning community where we foster dreams, explore possibilities, and create futures.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions concerning your schools, the answer is only a telephone call away:
269-250-8907

STORIES OR INFORMATION

The Comstock Communicator is published by Comstock Public Schools. Information may be sent to Dr. Jeff Thoenes at jeff.thoenes@comstockps.org or by fax at 250-8908. It may also be e-mailed to Phyllis Rose at phyllisarose@aol.com.



@ComstockPS

What Dr. Thoenes just finished reading:

In Harm's Way - The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis and the Extraordinary Story of Its Survivors (2001); by Doug Stanton

A reminder: "March is Reading Month" is just around the corner. Ask your children about their favorite books and authors and share a book together!



Facilities Review Committee Presents Report

By Dr. Jeffrey Thoenes, Superintendent

The Facilities Review Committee (FRC) recently presented its findings to the School Board following a year long evaluation of the district’s infrastructure. Here are the key findings and recommendations of the Facilities Review Committee:

1. A voter-approved bond is the District’s only avenue to obtain the necessary funding for capital improvements. Given the current state of the District’s facilities as identified by the FRC, the group recommends the District put a bond before voters in May, 2022.
2. The EPIC MRA poll of likely Comstock voters showed there was community support to extend the current bond for five years and include an additional half mill increase. The extension of the millage would generate approximately \$32 million and the half mill increase would generate another \$7 million for a total of \$39 million. To put the proposed millage increase in perspective, a half mill would cost the owner of a \$200,000 home about \$50 a year. Owners of a \$100,000 home would see their taxes increase about \$25 a year or about \$2 a month.
3. Of the nine public school districts in Kalamazoo County, Comstock Public Schools currently has the lowest millage rate. If voters approve a half mill tax increase this May, Comstock would still have the lowest millage rate in the county.
4. Of the nine public school districts in Kalamazoo, eight currently have active construction or renovation projects paid for with voter-approved bonds. The FRC recommends that Comstock continue to modernize facilities in an effort to attract new families and retain staff in this competitive local environment.
5. The FRC recommends the district prioritize the following renovation projects:

<u>Comstock High School</u>	
Replace Lighting	\$2,756,800
Reroof building	\$2,400,000
Remodel kitchen /food service areas	\$2,248,800
Replace acoustical ceilings	\$1,518,100
Modernize science classrooms	\$923,000
Remodel woodshop / update equipment	\$898,100
Remodel band room	\$784,400
Repaint interior	\$674,200
Replace classroom carpet	\$292,800
Replace second floor windows	\$234,400
Replace elevator in existing shaft	\$183,800
Replace 450 lockers	\$173,000
Replace 10 drinking fountains	\$66,900
TOTAL	\$13,154,300

<u>Comstock Community Auditorium</u>	
New interior doors and locks	\$147,300
New LVT flooring in Colt Center	\$67,900
Renovate the kitchenette	\$65,200
TOTAL	\$280,400

<u>Robert P. Hamet Athletic Complex</u>	
Track repairs	\$517,200
Softball / baseball field drainage	\$205,000
Replace west property line fencing	\$84,100
TOTAL	\$806,300

<u>Pending Projects (If funding becomes available)</u>	
Artificial turf @ Stadium	\$1,747,300
Replace tennis courts	\$1,131,200
Expand Auditorium Scene shop	\$478,300
TOTAL	\$3,356,800

The FRC recommends that the district utilize federal ESSER monies to install air conditioning at Comstock High School

Air handling units	\$637,800
New piping	\$379,600
HVAC	\$2,657,200
TOTAL	\$3,674,600

After extensive analysis, the FRC believes the best option for the STEM Academy is to build a new building at the current location for approximately \$24 million. The current school was built in 1949 and was never designed or intended for use as a K-8 STEM educational facility. Building a new school at the current location is not drastically more costly than remodeling and renovating the current building (\$24 million compared to \$20 million) and has many advantages - some of which are improved traffic flow, no existing asbestos or lead, all modern construction, and easy access to the natural beauty and educational opportunities of the Kalamazoo River.

Finally, the FRC recommended the following bond budget scenario if the public approves the half mill increase which would generate \$39 million.

a. All identified projects at Comstock High School, Comstock Community Auditorium, and the Hamet Athletic Complex	\$17.5M
b. New STEM Academy	+\$24M
	\$41.5M
c. Subtracting the “Pending Projects”	-\$3.3M
TOTAL	\$38.2M

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me either via email, phone call, or personal visit. I can be reached at Jeff.Thoenes@ComstockPS.org or 269-250-8906.

Board Briefs

REGULAR MEETING

November 8, 2021

- Recognized Students of the Month
 - Madisyn Crawford (CELA Student, GSRP Program)
 - Channing Harp (Elementary, Fifth Grade)
 - Winston Greve (STEM Academy, Fourth Grade)
 - Cayla Nash (Middle School, Seventh Grade)
 - Deepkumar Patel (High School, Junior)
 - Eli Briley (Compass, Senior)
 - Steven Leppen (Virtual Academy, Junior)
- Recognized Staff of the Month
 - Melissa Carouthers-Curry (Elementary, Custodian)
- Accepted resignations of the following:
 - Morgan Jansen, music teacher, CES
 - Tom Pitt, PE teacher, CMS
 - Jason Hayes, PE teacher, CHS
- Approved hiring Jennifer Aniano, Compass, Teacher

REGULAR MEETING

November 22, 2021

- Adjusted the 2022-2023 calendar so that winter break is 12/26 to 1/06 instead of 12/19 to 12/30.
- Moved into closed session to discuss the Superintendent's quarterly evaluation.



Hazardous Weather Communications

With hazardous weather conditions just around the corner, Comstock Public Schools is encouraging all parents to talk with their children about the possibility of school closing due to bad weather. In the event that school must be closed early on any given day, please have a plan developed with your children so they arrive home safely.

Every effort is made to make a decision to close school by 5 a.m. and to notify the news media immediately. However, the district has no control over how quickly the information is disseminated by the media.

Below is a list of the multiple ways you can be notified of early closings, or school closings:

You may sign-up to follow Tweets at <https://twitter.com/ComstockPS> regarding school closings or go to our website at

www.comstockps.org.

Make sure your Infinite Campus portal is current with correct contact information in order to receive ShoutPoint notification.

For the latest school closings, turn your radio or television to the following stations:

CALL LETTERS

98.5 FM, 96.5 FM (WNWN, WFAT)
 100.9 FM (WQXC)
 903 AM, 1400 AM (WBCK, WRCC)
 106.5 FM, 590 AM, 1470 AM (WQLR, WKZO, WQSN)
 107.7 FM, 103.3 FM (WRKR, WKFR)
 TV 3 WWMT-TV
 TV 8 WOOD-TV
 TV 4 WOTV

2021-22 Comstock Public Schools Calendar

February 22, 2022	CHS Conferences		
February 24-25, 2022	Mid-Winter Break		No Students/Teachers
March 3, 2022	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
March 15, 2022	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 17, 2022	Comstock Elementary & STEM Conferences	4:00-8:00 (CES) & 3:00-7:00 (STEM)	
March 18, 2022	DPPD	8:00-3:00	No Students
March 25-April 1, 2022	Spring Break		No Students/ No Teachers
May 5, 2022	CHS Conferences	3:00-7:00	
May 12, 2022	Comstock Middle School Conferences	3:00-7:00	
May 30, 2022	Memorial Day		No Students/No Staff
June 6,7,8, 2022	Half Day Students K-12 (High School Exams)		Half Day Students and Teachers K-12
June 8, 2022	Last Half Day for Students/Records Day PM		Half Day Students AM/ Staff Records Day PM

UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

In an effort to ensure that all our families receive communications about their students, we are asking everyone to make sure we have up-to-date contact information.

Please log on to the Infinite Campus Portal and fill out the Online Registration to verify that we have all of the correct information for your students. This year this is also available from the Parent Portal App.

Please go to the Portal and log in. Select "MORE" from the menu, and then Online Registration on the left. Please follow the prompts. It will look like a new registration, but it is just to make sure everything is correct in our system. You just need one per family.

If you need a portal account, please contact us.

Infinite Campus has two apps to help you and your students stay up-to-date with grades and missing assignments.

Go to the App Store and search for "Campus Portal." There are two apps: one for students and one for parents. Make sure you select the correct one. When you launch the app, it will ask you to pick your state and school district.

Once you're signed in, you will see announcements as they are posted. If you enable push notifications, you can see assignments as soon as they are graded, and any that are missed. You can also see if your student was marked absent or tardy.

It's easy to schedule conferences and contact teachers quickly, or to see your student's EDP.

When making choices about how you wish to be contacted, go to the website, log in to Infinite Campus and indicate your preferences.

If you don't have a portal account, we're happy to get you connected. Please contact us.

CPS Receives Two Grants

The District recently received two important grants from the Michigan Department of Education.

The first grant, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant, is worth \$36,300 and is to promote the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables through our school lunch program.

Thanks to Food Service Director Holly Wait and Assistant Superintendent Jill Ansel for apply-

ing for this financial and health opportunity.

The second grant, the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Grant, is worth \$14,562.50. These funds will cover the cost of the district's NWEA Map testing in grades kindergarten through eighth.

Credit for applying for this grant goes to Assistant Superintendent Jill Ansel. Combined, the grants are worth about \$51,000.



Are you interested in FREE training as a Healthcare Worker with employers who are ready to hire you?

These jobs are in demand, and the pay is great!

The training at Comstock Community Education is Monday - Friday from 8am to 12pm.

When you finish training, you will receive assistance with job placement, and there is an opportunity for you to continue into **FREE** training as a Certified Nurse Aide.

If you are between the ages of 18 and 24 and live in Kalamazoo County, contact Lisa Smith at:

Lisa.Smith@KRESA.org or 269-775-1664

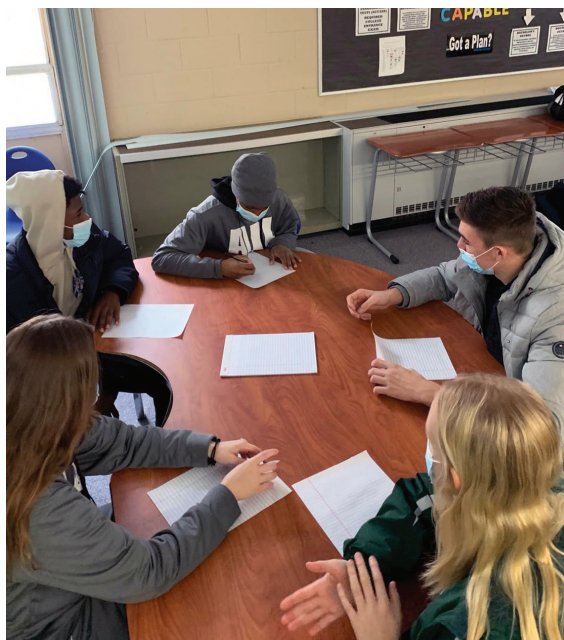
If you are above age 24, the \$750 tuition may be covered. Please contact Lisa using the contact information above, or contact Kelly in the Compass High School office at:

Kelly.Noteboom@ComstockPS.org or 269-250-8930

*Please pass this information along to friends and family who might be interested.
We look forward to hearing from you!*

Comstock High School

CPS, Hartford Sponsor Exchange



Student athletes from Hartford Public Schools met with Comstock athletes to foster positive relationships and sportsmanship.

The athletic departments of Comstock and Hartford Public Schools recently sponsored a student athlete exchange. Eight Hartford basketball players and their athletic director met with nine Comstock basketball players and Justin Ansel,

athletic director.

“We wanted the students to develop and foster positive relationships,” said Mr. Ansel of the purpose of the exchange. “The day was a complete success.”

The students worked together to write a sportsmanship announcement to be used at the beginning of the games. They also created a unity slogan to be put on t-shirts.



3-D Design Students Create Home Models

Students in the 3-D design class, taught by Ryan Cousins, developed and modeled their own custom home designs from scratch. They had to create each wall and place every object with precision.

When their designs were complete, students created different scenes, including floor plans, elevations, isometric views, and sectionals. Finally, they placed these scenes into a layout, which were then printed on the large format printer.

“They did a really great job and showed a lot of creativity and dedication to a very comprehensive and long-term project,” said Mr. Cousins.



High school students developed and modeled custom home designs in the 3-D design class taught by Ryan Cousins.

STEM Academy

STEM Academy Students Explore Future Options



Students "sell" foods from their food trucks.

Sixth and eighth grade students at the STEM Academy recently explored various options for their upcoming high school experiences and for post-high school job opportunities. They have explored colleges, the trades, the military, and even entrepreneurship.

For the entrepreneurship portion, they learned about food trucks through a simulation. They had to design a food truck, create a menu with prices, and decide on a catchy motto. They eventually built their food trucks, including everything that goes inside the truck, and took turns "selling" their food to the students in the opposite grade.

According to their teachers in the Comstock Career Academy, Mrs. Tennant and Mr. Perkowski, the activity was a great success with students having a lot of fun working on the project and learning about some important components it takes to start their own business.



A sample food truck.

STEM Academy Named State Winner in Samsung Contest

The STEM Academy team of Raylee Maize-Scaife, Michael Meerovich, Jayce Palmer, and Aiden Speedy has been named one of 100 state winners in the 12th annual Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest.

Samsung says this contest is "a nationwide education competition that challenges 6-12th grade students and their teachers to creatively use STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills to tackle local issues of national importance while keeping sustainability in mind."

For their project, the STEM Academy students hope to create watershed monitoring stations along the Kalamazoo River to send data to scientists and the community about the river. This is in response to various problems that have occurred in the Kalamazoo River, including an oil spill several years ago and the draining of a hydroelectric dam that wiped out the aquatic ecosystem.

Students will work with local agencies to determine the locations of the monitors and will find private partners to sponsor and fund the stations.

As a state winner, the STEM Academy won \$6,500 to be used for technology and classroom supplies.

For the national phase of the contest, state winners will work with a Samsung mentor to prepare a video to showcase their project and hopefully advance to future phases of the contest.

Ten national finalists will compete in the spring.



STEM Academy students took state honors in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest.

Of these 10, seven will receive \$50,000 in technology and supplies while the three national winners will receive \$100,000 in technology and supplies.

STEM Academy's Solve for Tomorrow Team Prepares for National Competition

In preparation for their participation in the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow national competition, the STEM Academy team, who won the state competition, recently met with Dr. Douglas McLaughlin of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council to do water testing for temperature, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity.

Dr. McLaughlin is providing advice and technical expertise as the team prepares its video to submit for the national competition.

The team meets twice a week after school to understand and address water quality issues on the Kalamazoo River

STEM Academy

STEM Eighth Graders Write Novels



STEM eighth graders with the t-shirts created for National Novel Writing Month.

STEM eighth graders wrote novels in November as participants in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), a program that challenges people to write a novel in 30 days.

Students used what they'd learned in their short story unit to plan and map out their novels before beginning their novels on November 1.

Each student had a goal of writing at least 6,000 words. By November 30, the eighth graders had written a total of 181,800 words collectively.

"The students did a great job and can now call themselves novelists," said

Danielle Tennant, English language arts teacher.

STEM Academy Receives Plaques

The STEM Academy has received two plaques from *US News and World Report* because of the school's national recognition in the magazine's recent rankings.

The school placed among the top 30 percent of elementary and middle schools in Michigan, making it both a U.S. News Best Elementary School and a Best Middle School.

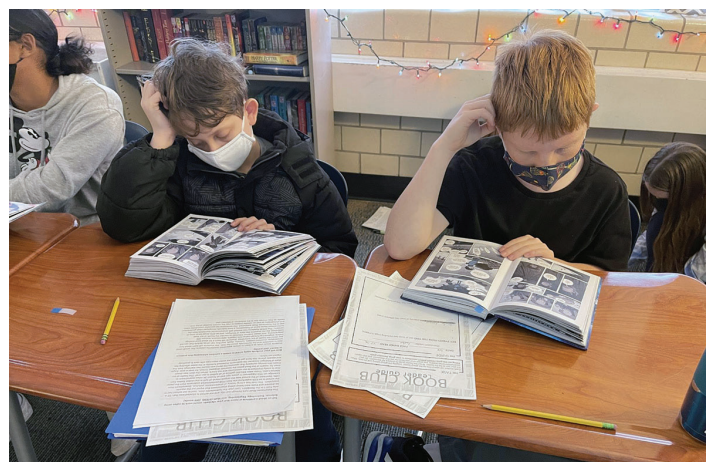
The plaques, which arrived at the administration office, were delivered to STEM Academy by Superintendent Dr. Jeff Thoenes.

Book Club Reads Graphic Novels

Seventh graders at the STEM Academy have been reading graphic novels. With help from the Comstock Township Library, the school obtained enough duplicates of books for students to complete a graphic novel book club unit with a partner.

Students started out with a book tasting, featuring hot cocoa and doughnuts, as they watched book trailers and perused the graphic novels to determine which book looked the most interesting to read.

They then learned the proper way to read a



STEM Academy seventh graders read in their graphic novels.

graphic novel and all the intricacies that go along with it. Now they spend time each day discussing and reading their novels with their book club partners.

Lots of interesting conversations can be heard during class every day.

STEM Academy 4th-Graders Decorate Desks



Fourth grade teacher, Kim Sandefur, recently held the first-ever desk decorating contest in her classroom.

"The kids really enjoyed sharing the joy and fun of a spirited competition," she said. Jake Hutchens won the desk-decorating contest.

Comstock Middle

Students Learn Anatomy with Gingerbread

Stephanie Brown's eighth grade health class recently learned about anatomy using gingerbread.

Students decorated gingerbread people to portray internal organs.

In the classroom contest, the winning cookies were decorated by Landon Meeks and Valeria Burr.



Comstock Middle

Students Compete in Innovation Expo



Students work with KRESA consultant, Dawn Pincumbe, as they prepare their pitch for the WMU Expo.

Students in Mrs. Duffy's seventh grade CCA class recently participated in Western Michigan University's Innovation Expo. Student entrepreneurs from kindergarten through college from local schools were invited to compete.

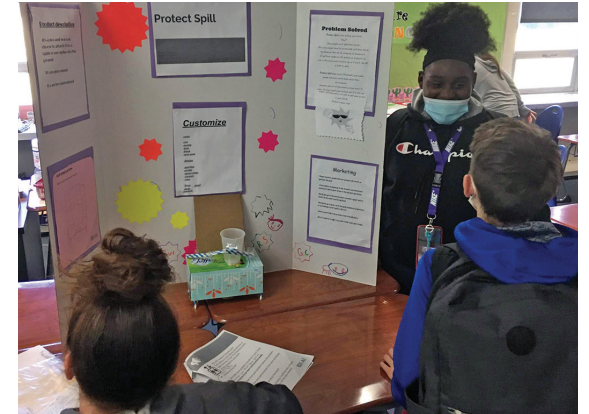
Five groups from the middle school competed by displaying and pitching their IDEA (Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Action) Slam



Ty'Shawn Rials, Brenda Hummel, and Chloe Anderson won raffle prizes at the Expo.

Project. Each group identified a problem and created a unique solution. They all created a prototype, poster board, and elevator pitch to present to the judges. Overall, the students worked for about four weeks on these projects.

One CMS group took first place for their division. Team Champion Gel created a design to help people dispense hair products without get-



Students look at one of the projects at the Innovation Expo.

ting their hands messy. Students on that team were Aaliyah Butler, Noah Knight, Sky Ramirez, and Ty'Shawn Rials.

Three Comstock students - Ty'Shawn Rials, Brenda Hummel, and Chloe Anderson - won raffle prizes.

Comstock Elementary

CES Hosts Annual 'Breakfast with Santa'



National Honor Society students pose with Santa at the annual Breakfast with Santa.

Over 300 people attended the annual "Breakfast with Santa" event at the elementary school before the holiday break. The breakfast, hosted by the staff, featured pancakes and sausage served in the newly remodeled cafeteria.

Following breakfast, attendees had a wide variety of fun activities and educational events from which to choose. Members of the high school's National Honor Society lent a hand as Santa's helpers.

"As Superintendent, I was so impressed with the joy and enthusiasm on display," said Superintendent Dr. Jeff Thoenes. "Jeff VanGoye reprised his role as Santa, and everyone had such a good time."

Trustee Donates Furniture to CMS

Paul Lamphear, treasurer of the Comstock Public School's Board of Education, recently donated two couches to the middle school's social worker Amanda Clapper.

Ms. Clapper's room is in the newly renovated section of the school. She was in need of furniture that would make the room more welcoming and warm for students.

Trustee Lamphear's donation of the gently used and beautiful furniture is a perfect fit for the decor and ambiance that Ms. Clapper was seeking.



Comstock Elementary

CES Food Drive Collects Over a Ton of Food

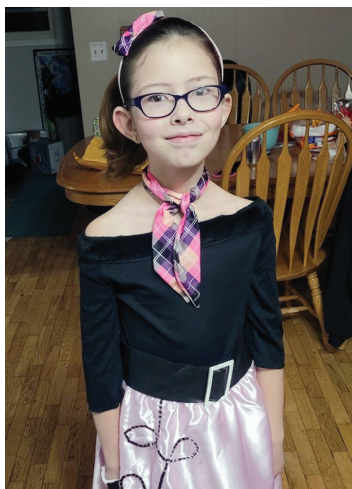


In the elementary school's fall food drive, the students donated 2,370 pounds of food which was delivered to the Loaves and Fishes food pantry.

"They were extremely grateful and we are very thankful for our CES families who helped make this happen," said CES parent liaison Whitney Wilkins who helped coordinate the event with Val McNutt, support coach from DHHS Pathways to Potential.

The fifth grade donated the most by bringing in 970 food items.

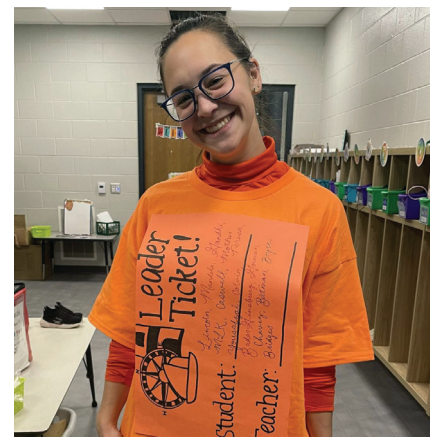
CES Enjoys "Colt Celebration" Week



Oldies Day



Crazy Hair Day



Third-grade teacher Carly Baldwin dressed up as a Leader Ticket. Tickets are given to students to recognize them for demonstrating positive behavior and leadership.

Students and staff at Comstock Elementary recently celebrated COLT Week. The goal was to reinforce the school's behavioral incentive program which uses the acronym C.O.L.T. which stands for Caution, Offer Respect, Leadership, Teamwork.

Each day had a special theme. Monday was "Crazy Hair" day; Tuesday was "Oldies Day"; Wednesday was "Leadership Day," Thursday "Twin Day" and Friday "Colt Day".

Celebrity Reads to Fifth Graders



Xavier Prather answers questions from fifth graders.

Xavier Prather, the first African-American to win the CBS game show *Big Brother* and the son of Comstock's technology director, Rick Prather, recently read books about kindness and acceptance to fifth graders.

Students reported they enjoyed his visit.

"I liked that he was like us. He played basketball, just like me," said Amire Lockett.

Maleah Kelly said, "I enjoyed his reading because he was a good reader, and he read us books as a reminder to be a good person in this world."

Kaiden Bolten added, "When he was reading the second book, it made me feel like everyone has something good inside even though you might feel bad on the outside."

Xavier won \$750,000 in the 23rd season of *Big Brother*. The show follows a group of 16 contestants living together in a house outfitted with dozens of high-definition cameras and microphones recording their every move, 24 hours a day. Each week, the house guests vote someone out of the house. At the end, the last remaining house guest receives the grand prize.

Kindergartners Learn Yummy Shapes

What better way to learn about shapes than eating them? That's what happened in Cathy Buscher's kindergarten class.

For a review of their Go Math's shape unit, families donated various food items in different shapes.

The students named and described the shapes of oranges, apples, donut holes, cheese, marshmallows, stick pretzels, chocolate chips and more.

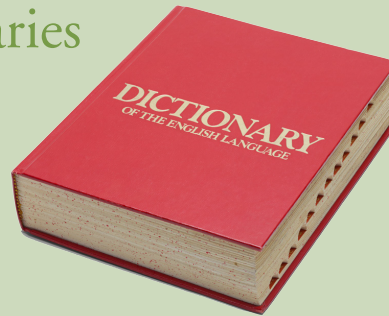


Third Graders Receive Dictionaries

All third graders at Comstock Elementary recently received dictionaries from the Sunrise Kiwanis Club.

Students enjoyed learning that dictionaries have more than just words and definitions in them. They looked up facts about presidents, state birds, and other fun topics.

Thanks to the Sunrise Kiwanis Club for their ongoing support of Comstock Public Schools.



Students Perform Dance for Chinese New Year Gala



CELA students learn a traditional Chinese dance which they performed at the Chinese New Year Gala at WMU.

CELA students in the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) learned a traditional dance to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They performed their dance at the Chinese New Year Gala at Western Michigan University hosted by the university's Asian Initiatives.

Ms. Ruyuan Yang, who teaches classes in the Mandarin language and culture at CELA, taught the students the dance.

Comstock Early Learning Academy

CELA Welcomes Guest Reader



Roderick Carson reads "The Good Egg" to students at the Early Learning Academy.

Roderick Carson, formerly dean of students at Compass and now a motivational speaker, recently read to students virtually at the Early Learning Academy.

He read "The Good Egg" by Jory John. It's a humorous story about an egg who lives in a carton with 11 other eggs. He's the Good Egg whose acts of kindness and generosity conflict with the destructive acts of the other 11 eggs.

An online review at commonsensemedia.org says, "It's a lighthearted, funny tale packed with positive messages about self-care and acceptance in a way that preschoolers will understand and even older kids will enjoy."

The students enjoyed the book and Mr. Carson's virtual visit.

CELA Receives Funding

Comstock Early Learning Academy (CELA) has purchased a number of items and school supplies after receiving funding from DonorsChoose.org, an online charitable organization.

CELA Head Start associate teacher Rashelle Hadley requested funding from Donors Choose for several items. She purchased games, toys, and an ice maker to make ice for injuries.

Founded in 2000 by a high school teacher in the Bronx, DonorsChoose empowers public school teachers from across the country to request much-needed materials for their students.

To participate, teachers go to the group's website, www.donorschoose.org, and post projects they would like to be funded. Donors can then donate money to whatever projects they choose. When the project is fully funded, the agency purchases the materials and ships them directly to the teachers.

Sports News

Hall of Fame Induction Banquet

Congratulations to Dawayne Heath, Class of 1962; Glenn Thomas, Class of 1968; Martin Johnson, Class of 1971; Tracy Daniel, Comstock Teacher and Coach 1987-2018; and Bryan Crosby, Class of 1985 for being voted into Comstock's Athletic Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame induction banquet was postponed in 2020 and 2021 to April 30, 2022. Tickets to attend the event are \$25 and includes dinner. Please contact the athletic office at 269-250-8711 if you would like to purchase a ticket.

Winter Sports Practice & Game Schedules

The Comstock winter sports practice and game schedules are posted at www.comstockkps.org. You can hover over "Athletics" to find "Practice Calendars" and "Game Schedules."

High School Spring Sports Start Date

Spring sports begin on Monday, March 14 for all high school sports (baseball, softball, track & field, girls soccer, boys golf and girls tennis). Middle school sports (6-8 track & field, 6-8 girls soccer, 7-8 baseball and 7-8 softball) will start later in March at a date to be determined.

Physicals

Each student athlete must have a physical on file with the athletic office in order to participate. The physical must be dated after April 15, 2021, to count for this spring. If your son/daughter needs a physical, Bronson Fastcare on Gull Road is a good place to go.

Student Advisory Board Established

The recently formed Student Advisory Board met for the first time in January. The Board was created by Superintendent Dr. Jeff Thoenes who invited interested high school students to apply for membership on the board. Students from the high school and from Compass were eligible to apply for membership.

At the first meeting, students engaged in an

icebreaker activity to become more acquainted, agreed to meeting norms, and then brainstormed topics of interest, curiosity, and concern for future discussion.

According to Dr. Thoenes, the purpose of the group is to create a consistent and direct channel and/or forum within the district for student voice and involvement.

Educators Visit Colorado Innovation Facility

Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Thoenes and high school principal Dave Kirksey recently joined other county educators in visiting the Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (CCIC) in Cherry Creek, Colorado.

The trip, sponsored by KRESA at no cost to the school districts, showed educators the possibilities for the future Kalamazoo County Career and Technical Education Center which is being designed by DLR Group which also designed the Colorado facility.

The Michigan educators toured the school to gain insights into its design, structure, organiza-

tion, and educational culture with the expressed goal of creating an even better future career and technical education center for Kalamazoo's high school students.

As a reference point, the square footage of the CCIC is 117,000 square feet. The future Kalamazoo center will be 175,000 square feet, which is approximately 50 percent larger than CCIC.

The 29 attendees included a number of KRESA officials, local business and industry partners, and seven of the nine local county superintendents.

District Receives Rebates for Energy Efficiency

The District has received two energy efficiency rebates from Consumers Energy. The District first received a \$1,398 rebate for the new gym at the middle school.

The second rebate amounting to \$2661.90 was

for lighting upgrades at the elementary school.

Facilities director Sean Gillette applied for the rebates through the Consumers Energy Business Energy Efficiency Program.



Father/Daughter Dance

Girls of any age with their Fathers or Father Figures!
A grand night of Dancing, Games and Food!

Saturday, February 5, 2022

at Comstock High School

Dancing and games from 6-8:30 p.m.

Pizza and refreshments served from 6-7 p.m.

\$25/couple and \$5/extra daughter

Professional photographs available at an extra charge beginning at 5:30 p.m.

More information – Call Amber DeLoof at 680-7867 or email deloof.amber246@gmail.com

Advance Registration Highly Recommended to help us get an accurate count for food.

Father / Daughter Dance Registration Form

Return by mail to:
Comstock High School
Attn: Amber DeLoof
2107 N. 26th St., Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Father _____

Daughter _____

Phone _____ Daughter's Current Grade _____

School _____

Please make checks payable to: Comstock Athletics
Pre-registered names will be at the registration table.
No tickets will be sent!

***In the case of inclement weather, cancellations will be sent out through a school shoutpoint email.

Comstock Community Auditorium Events

February:

5 - Comstock Athletics Father/Daughter Dance: 5:30 p.m. - Tickets: 250-8712

9 - Compass High School graduation: 6 p.m.; Rehearsal at 5 p.m.

19 - Traci Phelps Dance Studios Competition Showcase: 2-3:30 p.m. Call Studio for details.

25-27 - Center Stage Theater: *Sister Act*: 25th: 7 p.m.; 26th: 2 & 7 p.m. 27th: 2 p.m. Tickets available online at: <https://kzoocst.com>

28- Comstock High School Band Festival Concert: 7 p.m.

March:

9 - Blood Drive - Colt Center - 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

10-12 - Kalamazoo Christian High School Musical: *Annie* 7 p.m. each night. Matinee at 2 p.m. on the 12th.- Tickets: Call: Kalamazoo Christian High School: 269-381-2250 Tickets available online: Tickets for Annie

15-18 - Education for the Arts: *Doodle Pop*; Kalamazoo County area schools will attend. 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. shows. Not open to the public.

25-26 - Heritage Christian Academy Musical: *Annie*, 7 p.m. each night. Matinee also on the 26th at 1 p.m. Call the school for tickets: 269-372-1400. Tickets available online at: <https://www.hcaeagles.org>

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

SCHOOL BOND ELECTION - MAY, 2022

Our community will have the opportunity to vote on a Comstock Public Schools bond proposal on the May 3, 2022, election ballot. If approved by voters, this bond proposal would provide \$39,430,000 for district-wide improvements.

This bond proposal was developed as a part of a long-term master plan for district facilities. Proposed bond projects were prioritized as part of a year-long facility assessment conducted by a group that included CPS staff, parents of students, and members of the Comstock community. This group toured our school buildings and facilities, and collected community and stakeholder input through four surveys and six community forums.

If approved by the voters, the bond proposal is expected to increase our debt tax rate by approximately 0.5 mills over the current debt tax rate. This equals approximately an initial increase of \$25 per year for every \$100,000 of market value home. A tax calculator is available on the district website: www.ComstockPS.org/vote2022

The bond proposal approved by voters in May, 2016, has allowed our district to make monumental changes to Comstock Elementary School and Comstock Middle School. These buildings now stand as learning spaces that any district would be proud to call their own. Comstock High School and Comstock STEM Academy, built in 1966 and 1949 respectively, have been found to be in need of similar transformations.

The roof at CHS has weathered decades of snowstorms, and is showing signs of age. Many fixtures have simply outlived their expected lifespans, including ceiling tiles, flooring and drinking fountains original to the building. Lighting upgrades throughout the building would be more efficient and less costly to operate than the lighting now in use. An updated high school kitchen, which serves as the main food preparation area for the entire district, would benefit all of our schools.

Comstock STEM Academy has seen its share of rain and snow over the past 73 years, too. Approval of the 2022 bond would provide funds for a new school building. The original builders and architects could not have foreseen the changes that have come since 1949. The building no longer supports current best practices in teaching and learning, nor does it adequately serve its growing student population.

A new building would enhance learning opportunities at STEM Academy, as would a remodeled wood shop for CHS students and a new band room for CMS students. Improvements to our athletic facilities would be used by a generation of Comstock Colts.

I invite you to seek out additional information about this election. Talk with friends and neighbors. Above all, please take part by VOTING. If you have additional questions, contact me by phone at (269) 250-8907 or by Email at Jeff.Thoenes@ComstockPS.org.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jeffrey J. Thoenes
Superintendent

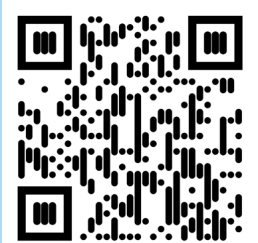
ADDRESSING AGED BUILDINGS

- Replacing aged roofing as needed at the High School
- Replacing aged lighting and select classroom flooring at the High School
- Replacing ceiling tiles which are over 50 years old at the High School
- Improving kitchen equipment & food servery area at the High School
- Constructing a new STEM Academy and demolishing the original 1949 facility which no longer supports current best practices in teaching and learning, or the current student population, which is experiencing over-crowding

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- Remodeling the existing woodshop at the High School and updating equipment
- Renovating the science rooms in the High School and updating with modern science lab equipment
- Renovating the band room at Comstock High School to expand storage and remove risers
- Constructing a new band room at Comstock Middle School
- Updating educational technology at the Middle School band room, new High School science labs and woodshop, and throughout Comstock STEM Academy
- Select improvements to the Colt Center
- Athletic improvements including resurfacing the track, and drainage/irrigation improvements to the baseball and softball fields

Scan this QR code with your smart phone to open the website. →



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a bond proposal, and how can funds from a bond be spent?

A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community for authorization to borrow money for capital expenditures by selling bonds. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on new construction, additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, buses, furnishings, equipment, and technology. Funds raised through the sale of bonds cannot be used on operational expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, school supplies, and textbooks. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

Why is Comstock Public Schools asking voters to consider a bond proposal now?

The last time Comstock voters approved a bond was in 2016, and those projects focused on the renovation of the aging Elementary School and Middle School. The May 2022 bond proposal would focus on improving educational programs and learning environments, and addressing aged buildings at the High School, STEM Academy and Middle School.

What are the key dates leading up to the Tuesday, May 3, 2022, election day?

- Registering to vote:
 - » The last day for voters to register by mail is April 18, 2022.
 - » Voters may register in-person through May 3, 2022, (election day) with the required documentation.
- Absentee Voting:
 - » Absentee voter ballots are available from March 19 until May 3, 2022.
 - » Contact your local clerk with questions.

Where and when will the vote occur?

Tuesday, May 3, 2022, is election day, but absentee voting can occur leading up to that date. All registered voters may cast an absentee voter ballot by mail. Voters may also cast a ballot at the polling location established by their city/township. If you have questions or do not know where you vote, please contact your city/township office. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3, 2022.

Are you hosting a public information community forum?

- Yes, two community forums are planned:
- » March 7 at 7 p.m. (virtual) via link - See our website: <http://www.ComstockPS.org/vote2022>
 - » March 10 at 7 p.m. (in-person) at Comstock Elementary School, 423 N. 28th St., Kalamazoo, MI 49048 in the multi-purpose room



Shall Comstock Public Schools, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed Thirty-Nine Million Four Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$39,430,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds therefor, in one or more series, for the purpose of:

erecting, furnishing and equipping school buildings and additions to school buildings; remodeling, furnishing and refurbishing, and equipping and re-equipping school buildings; acquiring, installing and equipping and re-equipping school buildings for

instructional technology and instructional technology equipment for school facilities; and preparing, developing, improving and equipping athletic facilities, athletic fields, playgrounds and sites?

The following is for informational purposes only:

The estimated millage that will be levied for the proposed bonds in 2022 is 2.45 mills (\$2.45 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a .50 mill net increase over the prior year's levy. The maximum number of years the bonds of any series may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding, is thirty (30) years. The estimated simple average annual millage anticipated to be required to retire this bond debt is 2.80 mills (\$2.80 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation).

The school district does not expect to borrow from the State to pay debt service on the bonds. The total amount of qualified bonds currently outstanding is \$0. The total amount of qualified loans currently outstanding is \$0. The estimated computed millage rate may change based on changes in certain circumstances.

(Pursuant to State law, expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses.)

Comstock Township Library News

Contact us: 269-345-0136 info@comstocklibrary.org www.comstocklibrary.org

Comstock Services

- We have Homebound Library Service. Please call the library for more information.
- Wi-Fi is available throughout the library. You may also ask about checking out one of our mobile hotspots.
- We have fax, photocopy, scanning, and mobile print services available.
- Download free audiobooks, eBooks, music, and videos at home through our digital services, Hoopla and Libby. Visit the Digital Materials page on our website for a full list of available electronic services.
- Visit the library's website (www.comstocklibrary.org) for information on all events and services. While on the website, you can also sign up to receive our quarterly e-Newsletter to have all the latest library news and events delivered straight to your inbox!
- The library offers a wide variety of programs for all ages. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or visit the Events calendar on our website for a full schedule of upcoming programs.

Comstock Library is Fine Free The library does not charge fines for overdue materials, with the exception of mobile hotspots and Playaway Launchpads. If you have long-overdue library items, you can now bring them back without penalty.

Curbside service is still available Call us to place an order or place holds through the online catalog and call us after you receive notice that your holds have arrived. Ring the library's doorbell when you come to get your items or call us from the parking lot and we'll bring your items out to you checked out and ready to go.

Looking to learn a new skill or try out a new hobby? Check out our Discovery and Storytime Kits! Kits check out for two weeks and contain all the materials you'll need to learn something new.

Current Kits for adults include: Birdwatching, Bullet Journaling, Crochet, Knitting, Macramé, Metal Stamping, Origami, Fun Cake Shapes, Woodburning, Postcard Embroidery, Tarot, Sizzix Sidekick, Therapy Light, and Metal Detecting.

Current Kits for kids include: Dash Robot, Night Sky, Oculus Go VR Headset, Mini Polaroid Camera, Girls of the World, and Sphero Mini.

Storytime Kits are backpacks that hold everything you need to run a storytime at home for young ones! Available themes include: Bedtime, Construction, Dinosaurs, Owls, and Jungle.

Book Club in a Bag Interested in starting up a book discussion but unsure where to start? Consider checking out a Book Club in a Bag from the library. Each bag contains multiple copies of a book and discussion questions. Book Club Bags checkout for six weeks and offer a wide variety of titles from which to choose.

CURRENT LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. • Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

UPCOMING CLOSURES February 21 - All day



Mother/Son Bowling Event

Brought to you by: The Comstock HS Bowling Teams

Boys of Any Age with Their Mothers or Mother Figures!
A Grand Afternoon of Bowling and Fun!

Saturday, February 5, 2022

12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m.

Continental Lanes

3645 Vanrick Dr., Kalamazoo 49001

\$25/couple and \$15/extra son

Includes 2 hours of bowling & shoe rental

Food and drink are available for purchase through Continental Lanes

50/50 Raffle!!

More information – Call Ray DeLeon at 269-277-4693
Registration & Payment due by **Friday, January 28, 2022**

Mother/Son Bowling Registration Form

Please make checks payable to: Comstock Athletics

Return by mail to:

Comstock High School

Attn: Ray DeLeon

2107 N. 26th St.

Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Mother's name _____

Son's name/s & Grade _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____ School _____

Bumpers needed (first come, first served): Yes or No (circle one)

Pre-registered names will be at the registration table.

No tickets will be sent!

***In the case of inclement weather, cancellations will be on TV